

# Mana

Mana is defined in English as authority, control, influence, prestige or power. It is also honour. Traditionally there are three kinds of Mana.

## 1. The mana a person was born with.

This mana is the mana that comes from whakapapa, or the genealogy of the person. This could be the rank of the parents, grandparents, great-grandparents right back to the people who came across on the waka (canoes).

There is also mana from being descendants of tupuna (ancestors) who are well known for their deeds.

Some whanau (families) are known for certain skills, traits and abilities, which comes from their tupuna. This is similar to how today there are families who are known for their sporting abilities etc.

## 2. Mana that the people give you.

This is the recognition that people give for your deeds and actions. Just because a person is born from great lines does not necessarily mean that they will have great mana amongst the people. The mana a person is born with sets them off, but the way that they conduct themselves throughout life will either strengthen their own personal mana, and by that the mana of their tupuna, or weaken their own personal mana.

Humbleness is a very highly valued trait in the Maori world. Many of our great leaders are very humble people, hence part of their greatness. The people sing their praises, thereby heightening their mana. These great leaders you will never hear singing their own praises. It is not that they are trying to be humble, it is that they just are.

## 3. Group Mana.

This is the mana that a group has, for example the mana of a marae.

This is often enhanced by number 2 above. When people stay on a marae, are well looked after and are given great food, those manuhiri, when they leave will tell everyone about the great experience, how well they were looked after and the great food, which builds the mana of that marae and the tangata whenua there.

One the other hand, if the manuhiri were not looked after well, they would be fast to tell everyone about that also, hence weakening the mana of the particular marae involved and the tangata whenua there.

Another form of group mana is the mana of a whanau, a hapu or an iwi.

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Today there are people who seek mana and deliberately go around trying to gain mana by telling people about their own importance. There is a Maori saying: "The Kumara does not talk about its own sweetness", mana seekers do exactly that.